

The *Star Trek* franchise began in 1966 with Gene Roddenberry's vision of a future in which humanity had ultimately achieved peace and explored the galaxy. Despite its cancellation in 1969, it has successfully cultivated millions of science-fiction enthusiasts and has spawned additional series, movies, and books. *Star Trek* has endured after 45 years not due to the special effects or futuristic technology, but the underlying storyline which contains a moral and reflects America's current cultural persona through the Federation captain in charge during each series. *Star Trek* engaged in important issues like social inequality, racial injustice, and international tensions, embedding overt cues into the storyline for the viewer to follow. Included in its overall message was the personification of America, using each series' captain as the example of America's current cultural times and attitude. This paper examines three captains of the *Star Trek* universe and reveals them as *Star Trek*'s mirror image of the U.S. and the expectant possibilities of humanity. As Captain Kirk said in the episode "The Apple," "You'll learn to care for yourselves. You'll learn to build for yourselves, think for yourselves, work for yourselves, and what you create is yours. That's what we call freedom."